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DECLARATION ON THE STRENGTHENING
OF INTERNATIONAL SECURITY

SECURITY COUNCIL
Forty-sixth year

Letter dated 20 November 1991 from the Permanent Representative of Bulgaria to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit to you, enclosed herewith, the statement by the President of the Republic of Bulgaria, Dr. Zhelyu Zhelev, in the North Atlantic Council (see annex).

I would very much appreciate it if you would have the text of the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 68, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Svetlomir BAEV
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

ANNEX

S T A T E M E N T

BY DR. ZHELYU ZHELEV,
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA,
IN THE NORTH ATLANTIC COUNCIL

Brussels, November 14, 1991

Mr. Secretary-General,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a special honor for me to be able to address this highly prestigious forum in my capacity as the first Head of State of Bulgaria ever to have visited the NATO Headquarters. This visit became possible owing to the profound changes that took place in Europe and the world at large in the past two years. They were prepared and carried out as a result of the long- standing efforts of the forces of change and democracy, to which the North Atlantic Alliance has a truly historic contribution.

Today, I am bound to stress the particular importance of the London Declaration of July 6, 1990. It placed partnership between NATO and the budding democracies in the eastern part of Europe on a radically new basis, contributing substantially to the stabilization and consolidation of the democratic processes and economic reforms there.

I am delighted to have this opportunity to address you just a few days after the NATO Rome Summit, which convincingly confirmed the willingness and the real capability of the North Atlantic alliance to renew itself.

The Republic of Bulgaria welcomes with appreciation the decisions made in Rome, which have a paramount importance for the future not only of NATO, but of the entire architecture of European security. These decisions are positive proof that NATO will continue to live up to its role as a guarantor of security and mainstay of stability in the emerging Euro-Atlantic Community. This is a role that we in Bulgaria highly appreciate and support.

Our visit here coincides in time with a crucial moment in Bulgaria's democratic development. On October 13, 1991, Bulgaria held free parliamentary elections. For the first time in 45 years, a non-communist coalition, the Union of Democratic Forces, is in office.

A unique possibility was created for a speedier and bloodless transition of our economy towards market principles, a democratization of the political life of our society and a thorough reform of the armed and security forces.

These deep-going changes made it possible for Bulgaria to take its befitting place in the family of free and democratic nations.

During the Persian Gulf War and the crisis in Yugoslavia, as well as in the dramatic days of the abortive August coup in Moscow, we firmly and resolutely stood up in defense of peace, freedom and democracy, demonstrating once again the complete identity of the fundamental ideas and values that lie at the core of the development of our relations with NATO.

The disintegration of the Warsaw Treaty has caused its former members to seek new collective guarantees for their security. This was a natural reaction, given the conceptual and material vacuum in which those countries suddenly saw their national security. Hence their strong desire for an immediate accession to NATO, the sole operational collective military structure in the continent. A desire to which Bulgaria, too, is not alien.

In the transitional period of formation of the Euro-Atlantic security architecture, Bulgaria firmly relies on the assurances of its NATO partners that "their own security is inalienably linked with the security of the other states of Europe." This clear message dated August 21, that NATO would not allow any violation of the security and sovereignty of the European countries, we regard as another expression of NATO's solidarity with, and political commitment to, our independence and sovereignty.

The Rome Declaration of NATO marks another major step in this direction and further strengthens our optimism. It supplements the indispensable trans-Atlantic link between the democracies of Northern America and Europe with an "Eastern dimension" of qualitatively new relations with the new democracies of Central and Eastern Europe and the states emerging from what was once the Soviet Union.

We support the decisions made in Rome on establishing new, stable and balanced relations between the key institutions and structures destined to build together the future Euro-Atlantic community. Those decisions will be further elaborated and supplemented at the forthcoming meeting of the Council of Europe in Maastricht and the CSCE summit in Helsinki in 1992. We

are ready to continue the regular consultations with our partners of these institutions and thus make our contribution to the formulation of important decisions pertaining to our common future.

The integration of Bulgaria with the European Community is a priority goal for us. In the near future we will be starting negotiations for an agreement on granting Bulgaria associated membership in the Community. Along with the economic aspects of such association, we also attach special importance to the possibilities that it would create for promoting political cooperation, for our gradual integration into the process of building the European Union.

In this context, we follow with interest the steps made within the European Community and the Western European Union for establishing a European identity in the security and defense area. We believe that these efforts will ultimately consolidate the European pillar of the North Atlantic Alliance and will strengthen its role as an effective guarantor of security and stability in Europe.

The CSCE process has played an extremely important role for the democratization of East European societies.

The establishment of a single Euro-Atlantic space based on universally recognized democratic values makes it possible to utilize ever more fully the positive potential of the CSCE process in overcoming the threats and challenges to the stability in the continent at this moment. Conflict prevention and crisis management - these are two main tasks that should be dealt with more actively within the framework of the new institutions, structures and mechanisms of the all-European process.

The progress made by Bulgaria in establishing democracy and human rights prompts us to expect to be granted in the near future full membership in the Council of Europe.

At this crucial moment, when the new Euro-Atlantic Community is taking shape, Bulgaria would like to make its contribution on a European as well as on a regional plane.

The region that Destiny has allotted us, the Balkans, is now again unstable and explosive. This understanding is also shared by our NATO partners, who see the region as having the highest risk factor in terms of European security. At the same time, it is a region of extremely great, strategic importance for Europe and the security of the world at large.

Bulgaria assumes its share of the responsibility for peace and stability in the region. This country has proved to be one of the key factors for stability in the Balkans. We have the potentials and political realities to remain in the future a regional "island of stability".

At the same time, any investment in Bulgaria would only provide an additional boost to its creative and constructive potential. I mean investment in the broadest sense: moral, political and material.

We do not question the legitimacy of the military assistance granted by NATO to our southern neighbors. We do not regard this as a measure directed against us. Yet, it is certainly liable to upset the already precarious balance of forces in the region. Proceeding from this point of view and from the declared desire to preserve the balances, Bulgaria should also be included among the recipients of such assistance.

This in no way means that Bulgaria contemplates stockpiling extra armaments.

Some assistance might possibly be channeled into the key structural sectors of the economy. Support for the economic reform in Bulgaria will provide more stability to the country, and to the region as a whole.

The matter of the balance of forces in the region also has a purely military aspect. Too much weaponry has been stockpiled, particularly along the erstwhile frontier between the Warsaw Treaty and NATO. This anachronism remains at variance with the new processes in Europe, creating certain difficulties for our foreign policy.

The region aspires for new approaches in dealing with the problems accumulated. We see no reason why the wind of change should not sweep Bulgaria as well.

I avail myself of this opportunity to express my admiration for the efforts that made it possible to convene the Middle East Peace Conference, an event virtually unthinkable until a couple of months ago.

The disentanglement of an equally tight knot, the Cyprus question, would be of tremendous importance not only for Europe but for the Balkans as a whole.

We look with hope to the eventual establishment of constructive relations between our two NATO neighbors. We witnessed major peace initiatives in our region which, though in certain aspects are ahead of their time, contain a great positive political potential. This is why we supported them.

All this done, we should not stop here. I would like to use this high rostrum to state that Bulgaria stands ready to propose the beginning of tri-lateral political dialogue with Greece and Turkey on an appropriate level, which would lay the foundations of regular constructive consultations. Such consultations, held on a regular basis, would not only help clarify existing problems and overcome the legacy of the past, they could also possibly help explore the relevant solutions to the problems of security and stability in the region.

Such problems of national security are not confined exclusively to the Balkans; they can be found in other parts of Europe as well. Regional approaches should in our view occupy a prominent place in the future all-European talks on security and disarmament following Helsinki '92.

This is yet another group of problems where we should try to think ahead of time.

Proceeding from this assumption and from Bulgaria's desire to make its contribution in pursuit of this goal, I would like to declare our intention to host next June a representative international conference on matters of regional security in Europe. I have the pleasure to hereby officially invite NATO as a collective body to participate in this event.

We do not share the opinion that the Balkans as a whole are in crisis. There is crisis in Yugoslavia, and we would not like, neither would be in the interest of the international community, that the germ of conflict would spill over the borders and into Yugoslavia's neighbors, spreading the contamination of bloodshed and internecine war.

The conflict in Yugoslavia acquires an increasingly alarming scope. Side by side with the paramilitary units and guerrilla outfits, on the one side of the battleline is the Yugoslav Federal Army. The number of victims and casualties runs in the thousands, and keeps growing.

But what causes particular concern in Bulgaria is the tendency of expansion of the zone of conflict. Incoming messages show that the very same circimstances that led to war in Croatia are being detected closer and closer to the Bulgarian borders.

Bulgaria has repeatedly stated that it pleads for a peaceful settlement of the crisis, for granting each republic in Yugoslavia the right to self-determination by means of talks. We are resolutely against redrawing the borders between republics in Yugoslavia by military force.

Bulgaria unreservedly supports all efforts of the international community to seek solutions to the Yugoslav crisis. We follow with particular attention and hope the efforts of the European Community and the CSCE, and we wish them every success. The mission of EC observers, who under heavy tank and gun fire carry out their lofty and humane duty in the warfields of our western neighbor, merits our highest appreciation.

We stand ready to offer any support as may be necessary for stopping the bloodshed and seeking lasting and just solutions.

I would like to state that Bulgaria is ready and willing to make its contribution to the efforts of the Community and its observer mission.

We are ready, if necessary, to make available any facilities, including communications, logistics and any other conveniences to representatives of the European Community in the entire zone in Bulgaria along the Yugoslav border.

The presence of European Community observers will not only come as another evidence of our sincere, good-neighborly intentions towards our western neighbor, but could also help prevent the expansion of the zone of armed conflict in the vicinity of the Bulgarian borders.

Gentlemen,

The Bulgarian people are pinning their hopes for security, peace and prosperity on their country's growing closeness with NATO. Now both the internal and the international situation are conducive to the fulfilment of their desire. We stand ready to make our contribution to the well-being and prosperity of a new Europe.